

Weekly Update: February 1, 2006



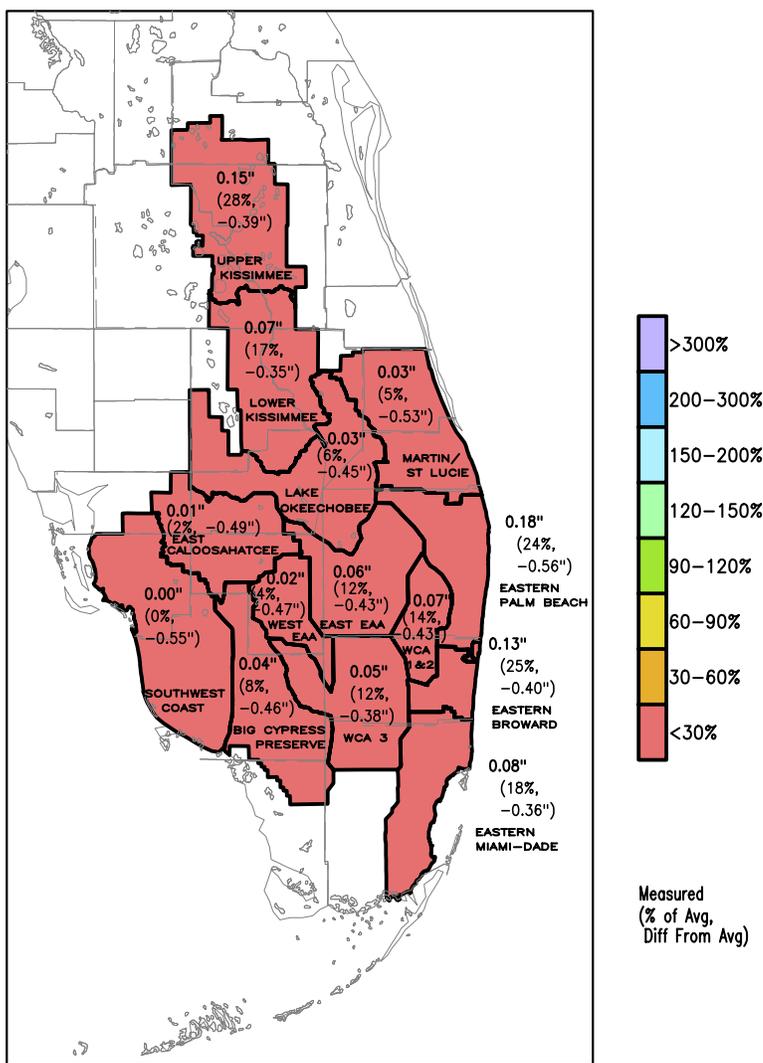
just the
FACTs

This fact sheet is provided as a reference to encourage a greater understanding of the various issues related to managing water in south Florida.

State of the Water Management System

To underscore our commitment to keep you informed, we will send this update weekly. We encourage you to share this water resources information with your constituents.

SFWM District Rainfall
25-JAN-2006 to 31-JAN-2006



DISTRICT-WIDE: 0.06" (12%, -0.44")

GRADS: COLA/IGES

2006-01-31-13:02



sfwmd.gov
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406
561-686-8800 FL WATS 1-800-432-2045
www.sfwmd.gov

MAILING ADDRESS P.O. Box 24680
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680

Rainfall overview:

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was negligible.
- The rainfall outlook for the next 7 days is for below average conditions.

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System-wide overview:

January rainfall totaled approximately 0.35" District-wide (20% of average). A front is expected to move through the District this weekend and will likely bring about two-thirds of one inch of rain. Rainfall during the next 15 days is expected to be scarce.

Overall, ecological conditions in Lake Okeechobee remain poor and efforts made by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to lower lake levels continue whenever possible without causing ecological damage to downstream ecosystems.*

Lake Okeechobee — Lake level is at 15.22 ft NGVD, down 0.1 ft since last week. Field staff will begin collecting routine monthly ecological data next week.

Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin — In the last seven days, the upper basin received 0.05" of rainfall to bring the 30-day total to 0.28", which is 12% of normal. The lower basin received 0.03", which brings the 30-day total to 0.28" or 16% of normal. Most of the upper basin lakes have stages that approximate their respective regulation schedules. Lake Kissimmee is approximately 1.27 ft below schedule. Discharges at S-57 and S-62 have been increased to allow stage in Lakes Myrtle, Joel, and Preston to decrease with the regulation schedule. Releases are not being made from other lakes, with the exception of Lake Kissimmee.

St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries — No water has been released at S-80 over the past week. All St. Lucie Estuary readings are in the preferred range, and water clarity will be sampled this week. Salinity conditions in the St. Lucie are good.

A 10-day environmental pulse release to the Caloosahatchee Estuary began on Jan. 27. Salinity conditions are good, and water quality will be sampled this week.

Water Conservation Areas —

- The average water depth in WCA-1 is 1.21 ft and has declined by 0.06 ft over the last week.
- WCA-2A water depths have declined by 0.09 ft this past week; however, the water depth of 0.59 ft is low for this early in the dry season.
- Despite the good recession rate seen in WCA-2B of -0.15 ft, the water depth of 3.36 ft is unlikely to support either healthy tree islands or wading bird foraging.
- Recession rates are good throughout most of WCA-3A. Depths range from a low of 0.81 ft in the north to a high of 2.6 ft in the south.
- Water depths in WCA-3B declined by 0.097 ft. to a depth of 1.27 ft.

* SFWMD water managers and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers work together to manage Lake Okeechobee. Water releases from the lake are made in accordance with a federally authorized regulation schedule based on many factors such as time of year, current water conditions, predicted rainfall and lake level.

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Everglades National Park — Rainfall was sparse across the entire Everglades, generally ranging from 0 to 0.25". Water levels continue to drop in the Park. This week, the recession rates returned to a more seasonal pattern in most areas. A similar increase in the rate of water level recession occurred downstream from Taylor Slough Bridge at the Taylor River spoonbill foraging site over the past week. This change increased the overall spoonbill recession rate. However, the water level at the Audubon station is at 3.6", which is considered good for concentrating fish.

Note: This rainfall information is based on rain gauges within the Park. The map on page one captures District rain gauge data only.

Florida Bay — Rainfall was sparse across Florida Bay, and salinity levels remain fairly low across much of Florida Bay and in Tarpon Bay at the Shark River Slough outflow. Salinity levels dropped this week in the north central Bay areas of Terrapin Bay and McCormick Creek. These salinity patterns are all considered good.

Other District News and Happenings — This week, the District:

- Participated in meetings with the Department of Environmental Protection and Miami Dade Government Leadership to discuss future water supply issues. Proposals for better coordination on developing alternative water supply plans and projects were discussed.
- Closed on 12,000 acres necessary to construct the C-44 project in Martin County. The C-44 project includes a 6,200-acre stormwater treatment area and a 3,400-acre reservoir, which will hold 14 billion gallons of water that is primarily generated from the surrounding basin. Today, this water finds its way into the St. Lucie River and Estuary. The construction contract for the test cell on the reservoir site is scheduled to be approved by the Governing Board at their meeting on Feb. 9, and construction scheduled to begin in March.
- Began the review process for the construction submittals for the EAA reservoir. The selected firm is scheduled to be presented to the Governing Board at the February meeting, and the final construction contract is scheduled to be brought back for approval in April. Construction of this 16,000-acre reservoir is anticipated to begin in May.